1601

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

Problems of Anarchism.

INTRODUCTION.

3.— *Political Authority and Personal Freedom.*

No government or political power existed in the earlier stage of man's career. Like other institutions it was the outcome of slow growth under conditions favorable to its existence. Aggression was the origin of all government. Political authority, the State, arose, was maintained, and extended through WAR. At first some strong man who could successfully lead in battle was made chief, as a means for the preservation of the tribe against its enemies, or for the purpose of attacking some neighboring tribe. His power ceased with the occasion which called it forth. But when war, aggressive or defensive, became habitual, his power consequently became permanent. A leader in war was for ages the only function of government, the sole reason for its existence. But gradually, from having power over the individual in time of danger and turmoil, the ruler came to usurp a like power in time of peace. The individual's liberty was cut down, his rights trampled upon, for the aggrandizement of his chief, the government. To effect this the better, new functions were by degrees assumed by the political authority. Time-worn customs were given the authority of law, and all fresh-made laws were framed and enforced, quite naturally, in the interest of the power that originated them. It is probable that ancient customs were just as peremptory as they became when given legal sanction: we can observe it in existing societies which represent a very early stage of development. But the pernicious character of government consisted in stereotyping, as it were, these customs, and authoritatively enforcing them, thus stopping the natural source of progressive change. Every statute enacted today has a like effect and is open to the same objection.

Of all forms of superstition that which universally prevails concerning the coercive and irresponsible organization known as the political authority, or State, is the most deep-set, dangerous, and inimical to human happiness. Many there are who have cast off the trappings of all other forms of faith, belief in devil and damnation, in Divinity and a future life, in soul, spirit, and everything supernatural, yet continue to invest governmental authority with a sacredness and awe altogether incompatible with its humble origin, its commonplace growth, and extremely problematical present utility.

Doubtless the mere fact that it is an institution of small beginnings which has developed with the progress of the race and been inseparably bound up with some of its most important phases is reason sufficient for its overwhelming power and the place it holds in the beliefs of the people. At all times, however, there have been individuals in revolt against its power and claims; often the majority of the people are found combatting the ruling authority, but never on the ground that authority itself is wrong, that government is in its very nature oppressive and destructive; they seek only a change in its instruments, its form, its outward shape or methods, but not in its substance where the evil resides.

From insignificance it gradually rose to omnipotence, till its despotic tyranny claimed everything and took away all the rights of man, granting back to certain individuals *privileges* which left the mass bereft of either, the prey to every kind of robbery and oppression.

The republican form of government is still the exception in the world; monarchy of one sort or another continues to prevail. In this form government's relation to the individual is the reverse of the American federal authority's relation to the States composing it. The States retain all powers and rights except those delegated to the federal power, which in theory are strictly prescribed. But the individual in relation to government has no rights at all except such as are conceded to him by the superior authority. In practice this fact is as true of republics as of any other form of government.

Some of the men who organized the United States and framed the Constitution saw with unusual clearness the truth on this question. They distrusted all authority, every form of power. But their imitative instinct was too strong for their reason. No people of which they knew had ever been without a central coercive organization. Their own existence as a nation was secured through war, the father of government, and at least enough for that purpose they thought must be maintained.

Their perplexity on the matter is shown by the kind of machinery they invented. If government is evil in itself, and at the same time not to be done without, then the best way out of the difficulty is to arrange its powers so that they neutralize one another, making the whole as innocuous as possible. Acting upon this plan, that immortal and perfect instrument, the American Constitution, was brought forth as the solution of the question. Without a knowledge of the fact that its inventors knew that all government is dangerous to liberty and naturally ill-disposed toward the rights of individuals, this precious piece of constructive ingenuity cannot thoroughly be understood. The point I wish to make now is this,—that in spite of all well-meant precautions government in America has gone the way of all flesh; it has evolved nearly all the pernicious qualities of its ancestral forms, monarchy and despotism.

Individual liberty is menaced as much by its acts and the exercise of its powers as under less promising forms of political authority. It has solved no problem, social or economic, which the others have failed to solve. It secures justice to the individual in need of it with no more promptitude and even less certainty than elsewhere. Its constructive, administrative, and industrial functions rival the worst of monarchies for costliness and incapacity. Its benefits, according to its own showing, are purely negative. Not what it does, but what it is kind enough not to do, to let alone, constitutes its main claim upon our tolerance.

Nor are republican forms of government elsewhere existing, in South America and in France, conspicuous for their better fulfilment of the functions they assume, or for their more enlightened use of the powers they possess. In brief, an unprejudiced study of existing political powers leads us to conclude that there is no essential difference between them; despite the fact that the average American citizen fondly believes and proudly proclaims the government he lives under to be incomparably superior to all other forms, to be the perfection of freedom and progress, the impartial student is obliged to admit that this grandest of all political institutions is precisely the same in its nature and essence as the others.

It is a truth of every-day experience that even the most democratic of governments continually assume additional powers and encroach upon fresh fields of action. But these powers are only in certain directions. And to whatever degree they extend their functions, it must be remembered that this growth is infinitesimal compared with the development of every kind of social function by other agencies; and also that in public utility and importance the work assumed by voluntary effort is infinitely greater and more successful than anything yet attempted through the agency of authority.

Whatever may be the ultimate effects, it is still true that the avowed purpose of all modern governmental activity, domestic at any rate, is not aggression or individual suppression, but the furtherance of the general good. Even the apparent encroachments on private liberty in many cases are really fuller recognitions of the principle. On the whole, the tendency of law and authority, except when their warlike character predominates, is toward securing to the individual a wider freedom and a greater share of the results of his own non-aggressive activities: in short, toward the sovereignty of each over his own conduct and its necessary consequences.

The rule of the majority — not that this is really true or could possibly exist under any government, but taking it to express the democratic form — has led to a curious confusion of ideas in the popular understanding with regard to the meaning of liberty and political rights. The average voter conceives them to mean that he has a right to meddle in everybody's business, and they in return assume the right of regulating his affairs, which remarkable doctrine has come to represent the myth called political equality. So that liberty has erroneously come to mean that each may interfere with the liberties of all, and conversely all interfere with the liberty of each; and the true meaning and ideal of individual liberty and the rights of man, that everyone should pursue his own course in life in his own way free from all restraint upon the full use of his activities and the realization of their results,—this ideal is entirely forgotten.

WM. BAILIE.

A Gentleman's Club the Ideal.

[Listener in Boston Transcript.]

Since we can't have a better ideal to live up toward, in society, than the fraternal spirit of a good club, where no one attempts to "get ahead" of a fellow-member, we should make the general abolition of tipping a part of our ideal.

And of course the end that all social philosophers are working toward is simply the turning of the whole world into a gentleman's club. It might be done. The idea doesn't involve any belief in millenniums and that sort of thing, nor any necessity that human nature shall be perfectible. When a man joins a club, he does it from selfish motives. He wishes to get comfort, advantage, pleasure, or service of some sort, for himself. And when he is in the club, he respects other men's rights because he wants his own respected. The thing works capitally. No policemen are needed in gentlemen's clubs to prevent the members from stealing, or from invading one another's rights. If any member violates the social comity there, out of the club he goes. So it will be with society in general, when people are wise enough to see that it may be so. Your member of society, your man in the world, will then find it to his personal advantage to respect everybody else's rights; and the possible one man in a hundred who is not disposed to respect everybody else's rights will simply be turned out of the social arrangement. He would be very glad to come back into it; and he would be in it, when he came back, not because other men forced him with taxes and guns to do so, but because it wouldn't be in the least convenient for him to be an outsider.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel."—PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Mr. Levy Off His Guard.

The esteemed and able "Personal Rights Journal" has not seen fit to take notice of the direct and fair charge of inconsistency which I have recently preferred against it in connection with the discussion of its rule-and-exception philosophy. Meanwhile I continue to find in the "Journal" new and strong evidence of the fact that it gravitates towards Anarchism, that its own logic and intellectual honesty force upon it the acceptance of the fundamental Anarchistic postulate. Ponder the following:

"I suppose there are few, if there are any," said Lord Kimberley, "who do not think that a government, to be really successful, must couple order with liberty." Now what does this mean? Suppose a government has done its possible in the direction of freedom. How is it to couple order with this? It has already, by hypothesis, done all it can to prevent invasive conduct; and any further interference on its part must necessarily lessen freedom. The coupling of order with liberty, as an aim of government, must mean the sacrifice of liberty, if it means anything. For what is social disorder? Either it signifies aggression, or it does not. If it does, order signifies absence of aggression, — that is, freedom; and the coupling of order with liberty means the coupling of liberty with itself.

Keen, sound, profound, but thoroughly Anarchistic! Interpreted in consonance with the fundamental Individualist claim, as clearly presented in Mr. Levy's "Outline," the criticism is worse than meaningless. Remembering the contention of Mr. Levy, suppose we come to the rescue of his lordly victim and retort thus: "Why, the coupling of order with liberty not only does not mean the diminution of liberty, but means the establishing of the essential condition which makes liberty something real and vital, and not merely an empty sound and hollow mockery. The absence of invasion is not enough; to be satisfied with this is to invite chaos and the dissolution of society. We must insist on compulsory taxation, and the right to force any man, no matter how inoffensive he may be personally, to coöperate with us in putting down aggressors. The man who falls back on the plea of non-aggression and refuses to aid us in protecting ourselves against third parties must be considered an accomplice, a criminal but little less dangerous and anti-social than the active invader. It is the *doctrinaire* Anarchists who, parrot-like, keep up the monotonous cry of non-invasion; we Individualists perceive that liberty without compulsory coöperation for protection is an impossibility, and therefore do not talk about liberty and non-aggression, but about the maximum of freedom and the condition precedent. We, in a word, emphasize the necessity of coupling order with liberty, meaning by order the compulsory collection of taxes and the forcing of men into service for the protection of society against criminals." What can the "Personal Rights Journal" urge in reply? Nothing. The point is simply unanswerable. It is perfectly plain that in the above criticism the "Journal" consciously or unconsciously took Anarchistic ground. V. Y.

"Die Menschen der Ehe."

The author of "The Anarchists," John Henry Mackay, has once more made use of his medium of expression, fiction, to break a lance for Anarchistic thought. Fiction is the most powerful means for popularizing the fruits of philosophy, — for sowing the seed that is to grow and ripen into practical results. Whether this is the proper function of fiction and true art is another question, which I do not care to discuss here. The tendency novel serves a purpose apart from purely literary and artistic excellence, although its effectiveness is limited in a direct proportion to its defects as a work of art.

In my judgment "The People of Marriage" lacks not in literary finish, but I will leave all questions of technique or art to more competent critics, and confine myself to the subject-matter of the book, or, rather, novelette. As it is not yet translated into English, a somewhat complete synopsis may not be out of place.

The hero, an Auban type of man, in answer to a letter revisits the small city where he was born and had spent his youth. The description of the city, and the petty *bourgeois* character of the inhabitants, ought certainly to satisfy all the requirements of literary art, while for the radical reader it possesses the charm of a picture of modern industrialism, divested of all its romantic illusions, by the sympathetic hand of the reformer. The now stranger, sitting at the restaurant table, sees in his mind's eye his former companions and schoolmates, who have all become most prominent, most respectable, and most philistine citizens of the town. How far away from him they all are now! The picture is a successful outline sketch of a civilization that spends itself in externalities, while the soul within remains a stationary, stagnant pool.

The hero, Franz Grach, is the foster-brother of one of the leading ladies of the town, a society belle and great beauty, to whose charms even he as a youth had momentarily succumbed. She is now the young wife of an old but rich man, who sometimes denies her the gratification of a whim. She is therefore devoured by discontent and *ennui*, and, having heard that her one-time brother and admirer is the author of a book on marriage, and craving a new and piquant diversion, has sent him a cry of despair in the form of a long-winded epistle, imploring him to save her from the horrors of her married life. Grach, with good reason, doubts the genuineness of the despair, but follows the call, because he can do so without great inconvenience to himself, and because he prefers to keep a clear conscience in any case. He comes and finds what he expected to find, a woman whose ripe beauty has fulfilled all the promises of her youth, who is incapable of being unhappy, thanks to the emptiness of her mind and heart, but who is bored to death by the emptiness of her life. She overwhelms him with the most trivial gossip, evades a discussion on the object of his visit, and, when she is forced to listen to him, his arguments and his views glance off from her fatuity without making the least impression. Only his remark that "sensible people come together when they love and separate when they no longer love" strikes her as shockingly immoral.

He remembers how in the first awakening of his youthful passions he had been unable to withstand her beauty and her sex, and in a moment of insane desire had clasped and kissed her. Then, suddenly sobered by the odor of her hair, he had quickly pushed her from him with a feeling akin to loathing. As then, so now he breaks off abruptly, and, taking his hat and cane, bids her a not unfriendly adieu.

In the course of the conversation Grach wastes the following definition of the "people of marriage" on the ears of his unappreciative listener: "The people of narrowness in opposition to the people of wide views; the people who never come into conflict with their surroundings, since they consider all trials — all which come to them from the hands of men — as visitations from God; the people of easy contentment, who find their happiness in each day's obscurity, always at one table, always at the same breast; the people who do not know what it means to give a promise for life, because they do not know what it means to live; the people of stagnation, not the people of action; figures, but figures that become numbers, and whom I hate on that account! — The people of the common herd! — The people of marriage!"

And again, when asked by the lady what marriage ought to be according to his idea, he answers: "I know but one relationship which I can call a worthy one to exist between man and man, as well as between man and woman: the one resting on mutual independence; for it is at the same time the only one that makes mutual respect possible. The master despises the slave, and the slave hates the master."

After leaving the house, Grach instinctively turns his back upon the city, and, ascending the hill that overlooks it, comes upon a garden resort, and determines to enter and rest. His attention is attracted by a woman who enters before him. He recognizes her at once; the proud, firm gait, erect yet graceful carriage, are unmistakable, and possessed by but one woman of his acquaintance, — Dora Syk. She was a promising young authoress, who had for some time been lost sight of in the literary world, the world of large interests and views, the world of intellectual activity, which was her home. The

surprise of meeting again in this town and this place is mutual and intense, but so also their delight at seeing each other. The necessity of earning a living as well as the need of withdrawing for a time within herself explains her presence in this city, where she has been a teacher at a girls' school for the last three years. Although she is laughing and taking a cheerful view of her present life, he soon discovers that she is disappointed and suffering. During their long friendly chat over a bottle of Rhine wine, he learns to admire her more and more, and suddenly becomes conscious that he loves her. He passionately entreats her to give up her position that very day, and go away with him. She, a reader of his books, has long admired him, and now consents to his proposition under certain conditions: "I love my liberty above everything, just as you do yours. We will therefore be completely, in every respect, independent of each other. We will spare each other, in time and sentiment, all silly importunities. If we do not wish to go the same way, each will go his own way. And — which is the most important of all — we will separate the first hour in which we shall begin — to grow tiresome to each other." He gives his enthusiastic consent, and that same night the express train carries them to Paris.

That is all; and that it is all is the bone I have to pick with Mr. Mackay. It is only because literature is still so poor in novels that have stamped marriage with the label "failure" that I feel at all grateful to him for the little he has given us. Perhaps I would be less disappointed if the title of the book had not misled me to expect more, and if I did not know Mr. Mackay's condemnation of marriage to be absolute, and not confined to merely "bad marriages."

Let us see once more who these "people of marriage" are to whom the book introduces us: the wealthy and, because of their wealth, comfortable and contented, and, because of their contentment, unintellectual and unprogressive philistines of a small city, sketched in most general outlines. Then, as a typical case, the more definite picture of the shallow-brained society belle, who has contracted a marriage, not of love, but of convenience. "People of marriage"! undeniably, but — "Thou say'st an undisputed thing in such a solemn way." These people and the guiding principles of their lives are most familiar types. Literature and society gossip are full of them, and even the conservative reader will grant that their marriages, chiefly of convenience and never of love hostile to convenience, are bad, tyrannical, and degrading.

Why did not Mr. Mackay do us radicals the favor of selecting for his illustrations types from that by far greater majority of the "people of marriage" who are not bored children of fortune, the foam of society, or children of squalid misery, the dregs, whose ideal of life is not luxurious ease, but to whom it presents a serious side besides that of a mere struggle for existence; who are not shallow and thoughtless, but who as a rule start out on their conjugal life with hearts aglow with love, hope, and aspirations? Do not these, too, almost invariably end as members of that great herd, classifiable in natural history as "Menschen der Ehe," some stranding there after violent shipwreck, some guided thither, gently and unconsciously, by sweet habit, some borne on by the indifference of resignation, but all getting there, and all deteriorating to the level of the herd?

Mr. Mackay has not, as his American friends, who knew of the forthcoming book, had fondly hoped he would, dealt a death-blow to marriage. Where is the great artist and psychologist who will, by giving to the world *the* novel of free love?

E. H. S.

Wanamaker as an Anarchist.

The post office is still doing wretched work in the handling of Liberty. After vigorous kicking, I have succeeded in obtaining reasonably prompt delivery within the city of New York; but outside the city, whether in Brooklyn across the river or in San Francisco across the continent, the delays are prolonged and provoking. It is an exceedingly common occurrence for subscribers to receive two and even three successive issues of the paper by the same mail, although these papers were deposited in the New York post office at weekly intervals. The paper is mailed regularly every Saturday night. Let each subscriber bear this fact in mind, and, whenever his paper reaches him forty-eight hours later than it should have reached him, let him promptly send me his wrapper, first endorsing upon it the date of the paper which came in it and the day and hour of its arrival. I will continue to bombard the postmaster with these wrappers if subscribers will thus help me, and perhaps ultimately an improvement may be thus secured.

But really neither my subscribers nor I should complain. Paradoxical as it may seem, Liberty's propaganda is better served by Liberty's non-delivery or late delivery by the government than it would be by Liberty's prompt delivery by the government. Every time an unconverted reader receives on the same day two copies of the paper mailed a week apart, he gets a practical object-lesson regarding the inherent incapacity of government that will do more to convert him than the contents of the paper for an entire year. Keep on, Comrade Wanamaker, keep on!

T.

Governor Altgeld of Illinois has appointed George A. Schilling secretary of the Illinois Bureau of Labor Statistics. But though he thus appoints to office a man who is a real Anarchist, he is holding in jail three men whose only crime is that they called themselves Anarchists, though they never were such. Is it not an anomaly that a governor should thus bestow honor upon a man whose greatest honor, after all, will ever be that he did more than anybody else to try to save from unjust punishment the very men whose terrible fate this same governor now prolongs and appears willing to perpetuate?

In consequence, I presume, of Mr. Yarros's recent article complaining of the unfair treatment accorded Anarchism by the magazines, the editor of the "Arena" has accepted an article from Mr. Yarros in reply to Mr. Preston's criticism of Anarchism lately published in that periodical.

I have no doubt that Mrs. Schumm's criticism of Mackay's new book is perfectly sound, but nevertheless the splendid passage which she quotes from it descriptive of the "people of marriage" fills me with a strong desire to read the rest of the volume.

The daily papers tell us that Hugh O. Pentecost has joined Tammany Hall and become a member of the General Committee of that organization. What does this mean?

In the last issue of Liberty Comrade Bailie's signature was omitted, by an oversight, from the second instalment of his "Problems of Anarchism."

A Bunch of Violets.

He stood near the grave while the dirt was being shovelled in. When the heavy clods struck the coffin in which she lay, his face paled, and he turned that he might not see. He loved her so and she was dead. It seemed so strange. But a week ago he had walked with her across the fields, and she was so happy. Together they had been in all their walks, in all their joys and sorrows. And now he was alone. They had rested on the grass, and while the wind sang on the waving meadow, they spoke of love. . . .

The tears were blinding his burning eyes. He heard the last words of the priest over the grave. The mourners were kneeling all around him. The gravedigger was shaping the mound of fresh earth with his spade and stamping it with his heavy boot. The mourners had risen, and some were walking away. A few hacks drove off, and now the place was nearly deserted: only he and a few friends stood there. Then some one touched him gently on the shoulder and led him away. . . .

The years passed: he had almost forgotten her. He had loved others since then, others more brilliant than she; but yet at times he remembered her; her simplicity and gentleness, — her love, his love: they were both so young and innocent. But he had known other loves since then. Had she lived, he would have married her, and then — (Then he thought of his other loves.) . . .

The years passed: one day he thought he would go to see her grave. When he saw the little mound almost covered with the tall grass, the withered flowers, and the tombstone leaning from age, he felt sad. They had forgotten her. He sat there musing. The sun was beating heavily on his uncovered head. A few sparrows hopped around in the quietness. And he was to marry her; to love no other for life (then he thought of his other loves.) — She had died. Perhaps it was better so (and he thought of his other loves). He leaned forward on her grave. Then he took the violets from his buttonhole and laid them there in the sun. Then he arose. As he walked away, he turned to take a last look at the grave. The grass was blowing in the wind, and on it rested the bunch of violets, fresh and sweet. . . . But he knew they would wither.

GEORGE FORREST.

Compulsory Fraternity.

Dear Mr. Tucker:

In "Solidarity" I see some silly sneering at "Tuckerian Anarchy." These "Solidarity Anarchists"(?) put *liberty*, "wage slavery," and *capitalism* in a heap, — as the three chief causes of humanity's wrongs. Fraternity and "solidarity" are of most value to them. Well, if merely *these* are to be the *basic principles* on which their ideal society is to be "built," — and liberty to be ignored, — then this "millennium" or "kingdom of heaven" of theirs is a place I would fear and shun *ten times* worse than the "orthodox Christians" fear their mythical "hell."

The way the Communistic-"Anarchists" put fraternity, I can see no real difference between *it* and paternalism. All men would be *compelled* to be "brothers." If anyone rebels against the "fraternalism" in the "new society," he will be treated as one too ungrateful to live.

Well, Liberty has pointed out and proved, time and again, that Communism and Anarchism are as opposite as the poles. But the revolutionary Communists seem to delight in doing all they can to confound these terms and keep up the confusion of the people at large in regard to what Anarchism really is.

The Communist-"Anarchists" *cannot* understand liberty; or, they do not *want to*. Like *all* authoritarians, they *despise* liberty. Yours truly,

A. A. SORENO.

MARVIN, GRANT CO., SO. DAK., DECEMBER 29, 1892.

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101. The Romanticism of Life. In French. By Catulle Mendès. Écho de Paris, Jan. 4. 1300 words.

136. One Kind of Officer. By Ambrose Bierce. San Francisco Examiner, Jan. 1. 3700 words.

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*140. Buckle's "History of Civilization." By S. Fletcher Williams. Unitarian, Jan. 3500 words.

*141. A Study of Browning's Poetry. By May Mackintosh. Education, Jan. 4000 words.

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132. Hustling Tom Johnson. With portrait. By Henry George, Jr. Indianapolis Sentinel, Jan. 2. 1200 words.

133. John Ruskin's Sad Mania. With portrait. N. Y. World, Jan. 8. 1000 words.

134. Eccentric Philosophers. Anecdotes of General Cluseret and Ernest Renan. By F. L. Oswald. St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Jan. 8. 1700 words.

138. Fall of Hebert and Danton. Illustrated. By H. T. Rhodes. Historia, Jan. 2200 words.

ETHICS.

88. The Ethics of Greece. A survey. By W. L. Sheldon. Chicago Open Court, Jan. 12. 6000 words.

†110. Can Moral Conduct be Taught in Schools? By G. H. Palmer. Forum, Jan. 12 pages.

FINANCE.

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†116. The Crisis in Silver. By Henry Hucks Gibbs. Forum, Jan. 17 pages.

†117. Shall the State-Bank Tax be Repealed? By Henry Bacon. Forum, Jan. 8 pages.

†124. The Theory of Final Utility in Its Relation to Money and the Standard of Deferred Payments. By L. S. Merriam. Annals of the American Academy, Jan. 18 pages.

*146. Silver in 1892. By T. Mitchell King. University Magazine, Dec. 2000 words.

147. Silver at Brussels. Relations of free coinage to India and Ireland. By Moreton Frewen. Rocky Mountain News, Jan. 5. 1500 words.

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